



*Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on
Aging Representing:
Agency on Aging of South Central CT
North Central Area Agency on Aging
Western CT Area Agency on Aging
Senior Resources - Agency on Aging Eastern CT
Southwestern CT Agency on Aging*

Legislative Testimony, Aging Committee, February 25, 2014

The five regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) represent older adults, individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers throughout Connecticut. CT Area Agencies on Aging were established in 1974 to provide leadership and resources to assist the rapidly growing population of older adults. AAA's perform comprehensive needs assessment resulting in regional three-year plans (Area Plans) to determine service and program gaps. AAA's provide stewardship for Older Americans' Act funds, which support many programs and services in communities throughout Connecticut. All Area Agencies on Aging work closely with the State Department on Aging to maintain a network of community-based services which allow older adults to forego more costly institutional care. AAA's are integral to the State's Aging and Disability Resource Center initiative designed to provide a single point of entry for CT residents struggling with the challenges of aging and disability.

H.B. 5225 - An Act Increasing Eligibility for Home and Community-Based Care for Elderly

An increase in the eligibility for the CT Home Care Program leads to concerns with delays in the processing of the current applications. It is taking on average four months to assess eligibility for Title XIX; an increase in applications and changes to the eligibility formula will result in expanded wait times. For many applicants coming into CHCP post hospital discharge, the wait period places the applicant in jeopardy of premature institutionalization due to extended wait times. It would seem that our priority should be to first correct the extraordinary wait times and then increase the potential applicant pool via relaxed eligibility requirements.

H.B. 5228 – AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE PROGRAM

C4A supports the increase in the eligibility for home and community-based services for elderly persons in the Statewide Alzheimer’s Respite Program but notes that increased eligibility without increased program funding results in waiting periods and service limits for clients and caregivers. This system provides a false sense of security for residents who assume they meet the eligibility requirements. The CT Agencies on Aging have less than \$2 million statewide to provide Alzheimer’s Respite services to nearly 1,000 residents. This program typically has waiting lists further exacerbated by long delays in Medicaid eligibility processing.

H.B. No. 5222 - AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED CARE FOR THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH ALZHEIMER’S Disease

The CT Association of Area Agencies on Aging supports H.B. 5222, An Act Concerning a Study of Funding and Support for Home and Community-based Care for the Elderly and Alzheimer’s Patients. The State would benefit from research that quantifies the savings gleaned by community-based services as compared to institutional care. In 2006, the Long Term Care Needs Assessment provided the foundation for much of the rebalancing work that is currently guiding policy decisions. A comprehensive study including an examination of the fiscal impact of the community-based supports is essential to control Medicaid expenditures and balance the State’s budget. The Study could also provide a public platform to enhance the education and awareness of retirees planning for their long term care needs.

HB 5001 (COMM) - AN ACT PROVIDING RENTAL COST RELIEF TO ELIGIBLE SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Recently passed legislation (Public Act 13-234, Section 38) had closed the Rental Rebate program to any new applicants as of April 1, 2013 or previous applicants who did not receive a grant for calendar year 2011. Any individual who did receive a renter's rebate for the calendar year 2011 may continue to apply for a rebate. But, if a renter who received a rebate in calendar year 2011 does not receive a rebate in any subsequent calendar year, he or she becomes ineligible for the program. This means that an applicant who was hospitalized and unable to apply in any subsequent year is ineligible for the remaining years of CT residency.

The rebate is based on a sliding scale and weighs the applicant's previous year's income against the rent and utilities expense. The rebate allows many low income elderly and persons with disabilities to pay for needed items that do not fit within their fixed income budget. This rebate is critically important to many low-income residents.

For further information on programs and services offered through the Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging:

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